

96-262
SUNSHINE PERIOD

RECEIVED

MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Conemaugh Valley School District
1451 Frankstown Road
Johnstown, PA 15902
April 30, 1997

Dear Commissioner Chong:

I am a member of the Conemaugh Valley School District's Technology Committee, and I would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan will guarantee that even the poorest will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools and, importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the work force of tomorrow.

The Conemaugh Valley School District would use the discounts to develop secondary and elementary school wide area networks which would provide Internet connectivity for approximately 1200 elementary and secondary school students and staff.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hudson

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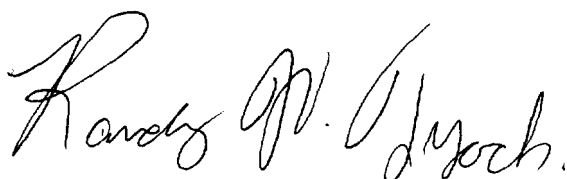
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Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Randy W. Dyck".

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michelle M. Locher

916-262
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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Garnie Ritter

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Thank you.

Sincerely, *Marianne Studer*

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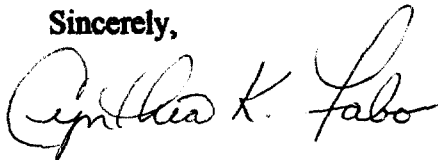
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Sincerely,



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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anna Thuckovich

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gloria J. Sollen

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theresa A. Mitnik

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kravitz



Breckinridge Memorial

1011 Old Highway 60
Hardinsburg, KY 40143-9732
Phone: (502) 756-2124
Fax: (502) 756-6042

DATE OF: May 6, 1997

96-262
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MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

MEMO TO: Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Federal Communications Commission
Contact: Eileen Duff

SUNSHINE PERIOD

SUBJECT: Upcoming vote on Telecommunications Regulations
affecting Telemedicine

It is my understanding that the Federal Communications Commission is preparing to vote Wednesday, May 7, on a telecommunications policy that will have significant impact on Rural Health providers. The Wednesday vote will be on "Universal Service" policy, part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The Universal Service regulations will allow rural providers to receive the same rates for telecommunications lines used in telemedicine that urban providers receive. With the current and anticipated growth in this segment of the health care business, this can be a significant cost saving for the provider and ultimately the consumer. Also, universal service will allow eligible rural providers to connect to the Internet without paying long distance charges in the event a local Internet Service provider is not available.

I wish to convey our organizations strong support for and request your vote in favor of Universal Service regulations.

George E. Walz, CHE
Chief Executive Officer

GEW/jdm

96-262

RECEIVED
FACSIMILE COVER SHEET
MAY 6 1997

HARDY WILSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
P.O. BOX 889
Hazlehurst, MS 39083

Federal Communications Commission
 Office of Secretary
SUNSHINE PERIOD

601 - 894-4541
 601 - 894-5800

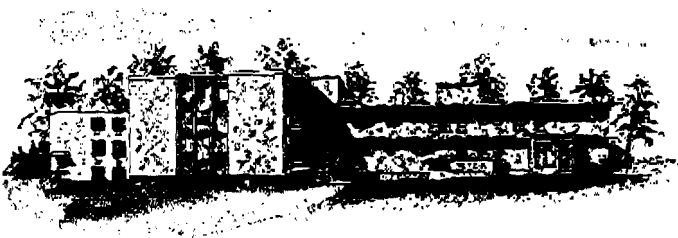
SEND TO/ AN/ A L'ATTENTION DE Company Name/ Firmennamen/ Société	From/ Von/ De
The Honorable Rachelle Chong	L. Pat Moreland, Administrator
Attention/ Zu Händen von/ A l'attention de	Date/ Datum/ Date
Elleen Duff	5/6/97
Fax Number/ Fax Nr./ N° de fax	Phone Number/ Telefon/ N° de tél.
202 - 418-2820	601 - 894-4541

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Total pages, including cover sheet:
 Anzahl der übermittelten Seiten inkl. Deckblatt
 Nombre de pages (Page de garde incluse)

2

COMMENTS/ ANMERKUNGEN/ COMMENTAIRES



Hardy Wilson MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
OF
COPIAH COUNTY
HAZLEHURST, MISSISSIPPI 39083-0889

May 6, 1997

The Honorable Rachelle Chong
Federal Communications Commission
FAX: 202 - 418-2820
Attention: Eileen Duff

Dear Commissioner Chong:

It is our understanding that the Federal Communications Commission is scheduled to vote this week to adopt regulations governing "universal service" policies as part of the implementation of the Telecommunication Act of 1996.

The universal service policies of the Act mandate that the FCC direct telecommunication rate subsidies to schools, libraries and rural health providers. In the case of health care, the FCC must make telecommunication rates for eligible health care providers comparable to telecommunications rates for similar services in urban areas.

The goal of this provision is to lessen the difference between the quality of health care services available in urban areas and those in rural areas, many of which suffer from a lack of health care resources and access to medical professionals, as well as the burden of being at greater distances from advance medical technology and treatment facilities.

We feel that "telehealth" has the potential to help our hospital improve the quality and lessen the cost of health care delivery in rural areas. That is why we hope to help keep the telecommunications cost for our facility as low as possible by adopting the following policy positions related to universal service provisions:

- * Universal service should support distance charges.
- * Universal service should support toll-free connections to the Internet.

Thank you for your immediate consideration and support on this issue. If I can provide additional information, or be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


L. Pat Moreland
Administrator

LPM/bjw



330 South 16th Place • Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235-1495 • 414-743-5566

96-262
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MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

MEMO

SUNSHINE PERIOD

To: Commissioner Rachelle Choug
From: Gerald M. Worrick, Administrator
Subject: Universal Service Policy
Date: May 6, 1997

As I understand, on Wednesday, May 7 you will be voting on the Universal Service Policy, which is part of the implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The universal service provisions will direct telecommunication rate subsidies to rural health care providers.

I strongly encourage the Commissioners to vote in favor of this provision. As a rural hospital administrator, it is very important that the physicians, nurses, and patients we serve have the same access to high-technology services as those living in the urban settings. It is through the technological developments in telecommunications that the whole concept of telemedicine will be available. This can only occur with our ability to access the large medical centers in the urban settings, which can only be achieved through low rates of access. The Universal Service Policy will provide and guarantee that ability to rural health care institutions, along with schools and libraries.

At this time we can only imagine the impact of telemedicine and the services it will be able to provide to us. This can only be achieved with low rates which will allow us to begin developing those types of systems.

Therefore, I again strongly encourage you to vote in favor of these sections of the Telecommunications Act.

GMW/kab

96-262

Ohio University
Communication Network Services
23 Scott Quadrangle Athens, OH 45701

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MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

CNS
Communication
Network Services

Fax Transmission

SUNSHINE PERIOD

From: Thomas Reid
Director, Communication Network Services
Adjunct Professor, College of Business
Former Member, State of Ohio Telecommunications
Advisory Council

Phone: (614) 593-1599 Fax: (614) 593-1944

To: Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Federal Communications Commission

Fax: (202) 418-2820

Date: May 6, 1997

Comments: Please see attached letter.

Total pages including cover: 4

**Communication
Network Services**

Scott Quadrangle 023 614-593-1610 phone
Athens OH 614-593-1944 fax
45701-2979

OHIO UNIVERSITY

SUNSHINE PERIOD

May 6, 1997

Reed E. Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Subject: Ex Parte Communication in CC Docket No. 96-262

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am writing to ask that you reconsider the plan to reduce or eliminate the per minute access fees paid by long distance companies to providers of local service. The impact on business would be severe, in many cases resulting in a cascading set of cost increases and revenue decreases that would cripple technological innovation.

Eliminates a major incentive for local competition

The existing per minute long distance access charges provide a significant financial incentive for companies considering providing competition in local dial tone. Reducing or eliminating this income stream will greatly reduce the likelihood that competing local loops will ever be built.

Increases costs to business

Business cost increases would be dramatic if per minute long distance access rates are reduced or eliminated. The promise from long distance companies to reduce their "retail" rates would do little for businesses. Medium and large business already take advantage of dedicated-to-switched long distance services that eliminate one end of the per minute access charges. We have also negotiated low long distance rates. Thus business line charges would go up and we would see little reduction in long distance rates.

Page 2

Chairman Reed Hundt

Federal Communications Commission

May 6, 1997

Further, many telecommunications departments chargeback for long distance service within their own company. With the reduction in retail rates, the margin between what we pay and what we charge for long distance calls will shrink. This will further hurt budgets for the telecommunications departments within companies. This problem may appear to be a purely internal issue; however, these revenues are used to enhance and expand communications services within businesses by the telecommunications departments. Thus, innovative deployment of new technologies will be significantly dampened by reducing per minute long distance access charges.

At Ohio University the margin between bulk long distance rates and what we charge students pays for free local telephone service in the residence halls. Thus, regardless of the ability to pay, all residents at Ohio University have the safety feature and convenience of a working telephone when they arrive on campus. This program would be jeopardized by the reduction or elimination of per minute long distance access charges.

Lost revenue to business

Further, many large business and universities have "direct termination" arrangements in which the long distance companies pay the business to terminate long distance calls on the business' internal telephone network. The long distance companies save money, the businesses earn money.

At Ohio University the revenue from these direct termination arrangements has been critical in building our data network and in linking our remote Athens location via fiber to the major carriers.

Further, prior to these direct termination provisions, the Ohio University call volume routinely consumed all bandwidth available for placing calls to and from the region. Our bypass of the local exchange carrier to link directly to AT&T and MCI helped us and helped the region. Without this income stream, we would likely have to sever our high capacity ties to the outside world, paid for with these per minute long distance access fees. The impact on our academic programs would be considerable.

Page 3

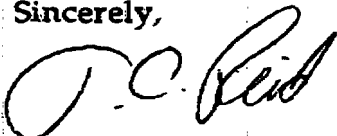
Chairman Reed Hundt
Federal Communications Commission
May 6, 1997

Usage sensitive local exchange costs are real

Heavily used trunks and telephone lines do increase the cost of providing local service. Increased processor capacity, additional device boards such as tone receivers and more intensive traffic management add costs that are directly related to traffic volume. Thus, per minute based long distance access charges make sense from a cost accounting basis.

In conclusion, I urge the FCC to leave the existing long distance access fees in place while the true impact of modifications are explored in more depth.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Reid

Director, Communication Network Services
Adjunct Professor, College of Business
Former Member, State of Ohio Telecommunications Advisory Council

xc: FCC Commissioner James E. Quello
FCC Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
FCC Commissioner Susan Ness
Attorney Brian Moir
Jeri Semer, Executive Director, ACUTA
U.S. Senator Mike Dewine
U.S. Senator John Glenn
Ohio Senator Nancy Chiles Dix
Ohio Senator James E. Carnes
Ohio Congressman Ted Strickland
Ohio State Representative Larry Householder
Alan Geiger, Ohio University President's Office
Paul Gandel, Provost, Ohio University

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MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary



WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

FACSIMILE COVER PAGE

SUNSHINE PERIOD

Date: 5/6/97
Time: 14:47:34
Pages: 2

To: Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Company: Federal Communications Commission
Fax #: 9-1-202-418-2820

From: Pat McGill
Title: Vice President Legislative Policy
Company: West Virginia Hospital Association
Address: 100 Association Drive
Charleston, WV 25311
Fax #: 344-9745
Voice #: (304)344-9746 ext 25



100 Association Drive
Charleston, WV 25311-1571
(304) 344-9744
FAX: (304) 344-9745

May 6, 1997

SUNSHINE PERIOD

Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Suite 814
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Chong,

On behalf of the members of the West Virginia Hospital Association I am writing to urge your support tomorrow for the universal service policy as part of the implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

West Virginia is a very rural state and much of our population remains isolated from services and technology increasingly available to more urban populations. We have made tremendous strides in the past few years in both education and health care by use of telecommunications. Our telemedicine programs bring health care resources to both professionals and consumers, and has permitted many of our citizens to remain in their communities rather than traveling long distances to access these services.

Through the ongoing effort of West Virginia Senator Jay Rockefeller, who was a primary sponsor of this legislation, health care providers look forward to continuing our progress in the area of "telehealth". We believe that the goal of improving the quality and decreasing the cost of health care in rural areas, can only be achieved if telecommunications costs for these applications is comparable to those in urban areas.

I urge you to support elimination of distance charges for rural health care providers, and toll-free connection to the Internet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia McGill".

Patricia McGill
Vice President Legislative Policy

cc: WVHA Members
AHA
Senator Jay Rockefeller

96-252

FILED

MAY 6 1997

SUNSHINE PERIOD

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

April 28, 1997

Ms. Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 844
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Chong:

I am a parent of two children in our local public school system. I am also a post-secondary education teacher and a school board member in Beaufort County. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your efforts in helping our schools to gain access to the world of information via telecommunication.

Through the Telecommunication Act and the Joint State Board discount plan, there will be greater opportunities for our district to enable our children to receive educational information through distance learning. This will also allow more instruction to take place without regard to class size.

Please continue to fully support the Joint Board discount plan for our children because they will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



Ronald Speaks

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MAY 6 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

May 1, 1997

Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St. NW, Room 844
Washington, D.C. 20054

Dear Commissioner Chong:

I write in support of meaningful discounts on telecommunications services for schools and libraries so that every school child and life-long learner can have access to the world of information technology. The Telecommunications Act - through its Universal Service Fund provisions - mandates the development of special discount rates for all schools and libraries so that they can secure services at affordable prices.

There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications services are important to improving learning, sparking the imagination and leveling the playing field for all our nation's people. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms and libraries will assure that our children and life-learners can connect with the technology they would need to compete in today's and tomorrow's workforce. Advanced telecommunications services in the classroom will also create informed and skilled consumers of new technology well into the 21st century. As of now our school system is unable to afford Internet capabilities to extend access to each classroom. Our local telephone company has been reluctant to give our schools reduced rates. We would like for our students to have the same opportunities that are afforded to students in more affluent areas. Without the passage of the Telecommunications Act, there is very little hope that we will ever be able to provide this opportunity.

Last November, the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service sent to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) a set of recommendations for implementing the Universal Service Fund provisions related to the schools and libraries. These recommendations would give our learning institutions significant discounts on all services that are commercially available, with deeper discounts for those schools and libraries least able to pay and more expensive to service. All schools would get discounts on connections to classrooms and Internet connectivity, both of which are essential to providing the most advanced learning opportunities to the greatest number of students.

I urge your support for the Joint Board's recommendations. Taken as a whole, they will provide affordable discounts for a full range of services needed to meet each community's diverse needs. Most importantly, these provisions, if adopted by the FCC, will make advanced technology for learning available to all Americans.

Sincerely,

Martha Williams

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Dear Commissioner Chong:

I write in support of meaningful discounts on telecommunications services for schools and libraries so that every school child and life-long learner can have access to the world of information technology. The Telecommunications Act - through its Universal Service Fund provisions - mandates the development of special discount rates for all schools and libraries so that they can secure services at affordable prices.

There is no doubt that advanced telecommunications services are important to improving learning, sparking the imagination and leveling the playing field for all our nation's people. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms and libraries will assure that our children and life-learners can connect with the technology they would need to compete in today's and tomorrow's workforce. Advanced telecommunications services in the classroom will also create informed and skilled consumers of new technology well into the 21st century. As of now our school system is unable to afford Internet capabilities to extend access to each classroom. Our local telephone company has been reluctant to give our schools reduced rates. We would like for our students to have the same opportunities that are afforded to students in more affluent areas. Without the passage of the Telecommunications Act, there is very little hope that we will ever be able to provide this opportunity.

Last November, the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service sent to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) a set of recommendations for implementing the Universal Service Fund provisions related to the schools and libraries. These recommendations would give our learning institutions significant discounts on all services that are commercially available, with deeper discounts for those schools and libraries least able to pay and more expensive to service. All schools would get discounts on connections to classrooms and Internet connectivity, both of which are essential to providing the most advanced learning opportunities to the greatest number of students.

I urge your support for the Joint Board's recommendations. Taken as a whole, they will provide affordable discounts for a full range of services needed to meet each community's diverse needs. Most importantly, these provisions, if adopted by the FCC, will make advanced technology for learning available to all Americans.

Sincerely,

Dolores Young